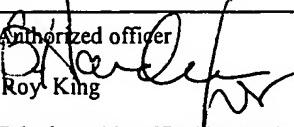


PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

PCT

INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT
(PCT Article 36 and Rule 70)

Applicant's or agent's file reference	FOR FURTHER ACTION		See Notification of Transmittal of International Preliminary Examination Report (Form PCT/IPEA/416)
International application No.	International filing date (day/month/year)	Priority date (day/month/year)	
PCT/US04/38585	17 November 2004 (17.11.2004)	17 November 2003 (17.11.2003)	
International Patent Classification (IPC) or national classification and IPC IPC(7): B22D 35/00 and US Cl.: 222/591, 594, 606			
Applicant VESUVIUS CRUCIBLE COMPANY			
<p>1. This international preliminary examination report has been prepared by this International Preliminary Examining Authority and is transmitted to the applicant according to Article 36.</p> <p>2. This REPORT consists of a total of <u>3</u> sheets, including this cover sheet.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> This report is also accompanied by ANNEXES, i.e., sheets of the description, claims and/or drawings which have been amended and are the basis for this report and/or sheets containing rectifications made before this Authority (see Rule 70.16 and Section 607 of the Administrative Instructions under the PCT).</p> <p>These annexes consist of a total of ___ sheets.</p>			
<p>3. This report contains indications relating to the following items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Basis of the report II <input type="checkbox"/> Priority III <input type="checkbox"/> Non-establishment of report with regard to novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability IV <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of unity of invention V <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement VI <input type="checkbox"/> Certain documents cited VII <input type="checkbox"/> Certain defects in the international application VIII <input type="checkbox"/> Certain observations on the international application 			

Date of submission of the demand	Date of completion of this report
14 June 2005 (14.06.2005)	31 January 2006 (31.01.2006)
Name and mailing address of the IPEA/US Mail Stop PCT, Attn: IPEA/ US Commissioner for Patents P.O. Box 1450 Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450 Facsimile No. (571) 273-3201	 Authorized officer Roy King Telephone No. 571-272-1700

I. Basis of the report

1. With regard to the elements of the international application:*

 the international application as originally filed. the description:pages 1-7 as originally filedpages NONE, filed with the demandpages NONE, filed with the letter of _____ the claims:pages 8-10, as originally filedpages NONE, as amended (together with any statement) under Article 19pages NONE, filed with the demandpages NONE, filed with the letter of _____ the drawings:pages 1-8, as originally filedpages NONE, filed with the demandpages NONE, filed with the letter of _____ the sequence listing part of the description:pages NONE, as originally filedpages NONE, filed with the demandpages NONE, filed with the letter of _____

2. With regard to the language, all the elements marked above were available or furnished to this Authority in the language in which the international application was filed, unless otherwise indicated under this item.

These elements were available or furnished to this Authority in the following language _____ which is:

 the language of a translation furnished for the purposes of international search (under Rule 23.1(b)). the language of publication of the international application (under Rule 48.3(b)). the language of the translation furnished for the purposes of international preliminary examination (under Rules 55.2 and/or 55.3).

3. With regard to any nucleotide and/or amino acid sequence disclosed in the international application, the international preliminary examination was carried out on the basis of the sequence listing:

 contained in the international application in printed form. filed together with the international application in computer readable form. furnished subsequently to this Authority in written form. furnished subsequently to this Authority in computer readable form. The statement that the subsequently furnished written sequence listing does not go beyond the disclosure in the international application as filed has been furnished. The statement that the information recorded in computer readable form is identical to the written sequence listing has been furnished.4. The amendments have resulted in the cancellation of: the description, pages NONE the claims, Nos. NONE the drawings, sheets/fig NONE5. This report has been established as if (some of) the amendments had not been made, since they have been considered to go beyond the disclosure as filed, as indicated in the Supplemental Box (Rule 70.2(c)).**

* Replacement sheets which have been furnished to the receiving Office in response to an invitation under Article 14 are referred to in this report as "originally filed" and are not annexed to this report since they do not contain amendments (Rules 70.16 and 70.17).

** Any replacement sheet containing such amendments must be referred to under item 1 and annexed to this report.

INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT

International application No.
PCT/US04/38585**V. Reasoned statement under Rule 66.2(a)(ii) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement****1. STATEMENT**

Novelty (N)	Claims <u>1-27</u>	YES
	Claims <u>NONE</u>	NO
Inventive Step (IS)	Claims <u>NONE</u>	YES
	Claims <u>1-27</u>	NO
Industrial Applicability (IA)	Claims <u>1-27</u>	YES
	Claims <u>NONE</u>	NO

2. CITATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS

Claims 1-27 lack an inventive step under PCT Article 33(3) as being obvious over any of SATO et al, EP 0852166 or DE 10113026. Each of SATO et al, EP 0852166 or DE 10113026 teach a continuous casting nozzle (11 in SATO et al, 5 in EP 0852166 or 1 in DE 10113026) including a plurality of outlet pairs (12, 13 in SATO et al, 8, 9 in EP 0852166 or 17, 18 in DE 10113026) and a reduced bore portion between the pairs where the range of allowable height to width outlet ratios includes ratios of 1 or less. It would not have required an inventive step to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to employ outlet ratios within the broad acceptable ranges described by any of SATO et al, EP 0852166 or DE 10113026 which impart the most favorable molten metal flow conditions.

Claims 1-27 meet the criteria set out in PCT Article 33(4), and thus possess industrial applicability because the subject matter claimed can be made or used in industry.

----- NEW CITATIONS -----